Purchase of 50 seater aircraft

627. DR. KARAN SINGH: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the purchase of a short hawl 50 seater aircraft is under consideration of Indian Airlines;

(b) whether such an aircraft will be able to serve far flung stations in Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and the North-eastern States; and

(c) if so, the reasons for delaying this purchase and by when will it be finalized?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) Indian Airlines is considering the acquisition of six 50 seater turboprop aircraft for operation in the North-East sector and other important tourist and business destinations. These turboprop 50 seater aircraft will be able to operate to airfields with runway length of approximately 4000 feet. The Board of Indian Airlines had constituted an Evaluation/Negotiation Committee comprising Members of the Board to examine the proposals from manufacturers of three short-listed aircraft viz. ATR 42-500, Dash 8-300 and Saab 2000.

Daily flights on Vizag-Hyderabad and Vizag-Chennai-Calcutta Sector

628. DR. Y. LAKSHMI PRASAD: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to operate daily flight on Vizag-Hyderabad and Vizag-Chennai-Calcutta sector in view of public demand;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM): (a) to (c) Commercial and operational constraints at present do not permit operation of daily services on these routes. Alliance Air, a wholly owned subsidiary of Indian Airlines is, however, already operating three flights per week on Vizag/Channai/Vizag sector, six flights per week on Hyderabad/Vizag/Hyderabad sector and three flights per week on Vizag/Calcutta/Vizag route.

Upgradation of Visakhapatnam Airport

629. DR. Y. LAKSHMI PRASAD: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) the steps taken by Government for upgrading the Visakhapatnam Airport;

(b) whether Government have since initiated any action to create night landing facilities;

(c) details of the action taken to extend the runway to enable A-320 aircraft to land at Visakhapatnam airport;

(d) whether the land is offered by the Visakhapatnam Port Trust, required for upgradation of the airport;

(e) if so, the details thereof?

(f) whether the land is taken over to start the work; and

(g) if so, by when the work is likely to be completed?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM): (a) to (c) Visakhapatnam Airport belongs to Indian Navy and Airports Authority of India maintains only a civil enclave. Airports Authority of India has completed technical study for the construction of a new runway at the existing airport and the report has been sent to the Government of Andhra Pradesh.

(d) to (g) Do not arise.

Disinvestment plan for Pawan Hans

630. SHRI SANJAY NIRUPAM: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the disinvestment commission has recommended to disinvest Pawan

Hans, if so, what is the action plan to disinvest this Unit;

(b) whether the employees of Pawan Hans are ready to accept the disinvestment plan of their company; if so the details of their conditions; and

(c) if not, what are their objections?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM): (a) Yes, Sir. The proposal is under consideration of the Government.

(b) and (c) A majority of the employees of Pawan Hans are opposed to the disinvestment in the Company. Their main objections are as under:—

(i) The disinvestment is aimed at raising budgetary receipts to meet the fiscal deficit of the Government and is unlikely to reduce the financial dependence of the Company;

(ii) privatisation shall result in reduced in employment;

(iii) profits may be utilised for individual gains.

Aerodrome Directorate of Inspection

631. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that an Aerodrome Directorate of Inspection is a Flight safety requirement to monitor standards;

(b) though this Directorate was sanctioned in 1993, but it was not formed;

(c) the personnel posted against the vacancies of this Directorate are being misused elsewhere; and

(d) who is responsible for this lapse and what action Government are taking in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM): (a) to (d) Nine posts of technical officers were sanctioned in August 1998 for Aerodromes Standards Directorate (ASD) meant for licensing the aerodromes. Since recruitment rules were required to be framed for these posts in consultation with the Department of Personnel & Training, Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) and Ministry of Law, these could not be filled up. The recruitment rules have since been notified and UPSC has recommended names of suitable candidates of the posts of Assistant Director and Deputy Director for the ASD. Action has already been initiated for appointing them.

Regular Air Service in the N.E. States

632. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government are considering to give IA a one time grant of Rs. 250 crores and other concessions to operate a regular air service in the N.E. States; and

(b) if so, what is the latest position in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

Fare fixed by Air India for Haj Pilgrims

633. SHRI K. RAHMAN KHAN: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) what is the fare fixed by Air India for Haj Pilgrims for Haj, 1998;

(b) what was the fare fixed by Air India for Haj in 1995, 1996 and 1997?

(c) what are the reasons for Air India to increase the fare by more than 60% during Haj 1997; and

(d) whether fares of other sectors have also gone up by 60% if not, by what percentage?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM): (a) The fare for Haj 1998 has not been fixed so far.